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Neoliberalism and the Future of Democracy

TRAVIS HOLLOWAY

Abstract: This paper describes neoliberalism and summarizes new works on democracy in Continental philosophy. Unlike *laissez-faire* or liberal economic theory—a "leave us alone" strategy in which the state does not interfere with private enterprise—neoliberal governments use the resources of the state to assist the market directly and employ the market to direct or oversee the resources of the state. Alongside neoliberal government, and in its wake, is a society in which the guiding axioms for each human being are self-entrepreneurship and competition. Over the last decade, however, a new body of philosophical work has been dissociating democracy from neoliberal government, critiquing a failed system of political representation, and considering to what extent democracy must take place beyond or outside of the current state. Of equal concern to these philosophers is how to take flight from a way of life that is characterized by self-entrepreneurship and competition. For some, the start of a political future beyond neoliberalism hinges upon a recent distinction between *constituent* and *destituent* forms of power. Whereas *constituent* power attempts to reform one's government through demonstrations in public space, *destituent* power abandons the project of reforming one's government momentarily or even completely in order to experience another form of life entirely.

Key words: neoliberalism, democracy, Agamben, Foucault, destituent power

I. Introduction

In one of his final lectures, Jacques Derrida spoke about a disconcerting "indetermination" in the concept of democracy that permits "an assault on democratic freedoms . . . in the name of democracy."[1] Anything may be permitted in the name of democracy, Derrida worried aloud, from "fascist and Nazi totalitarianisms" to the "demagogy of the leader" to the neoliberalization or

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I. Introduction

In one of his final lectures, Jacques Derrida spoke about a disconcerting "indetermination" in the concept of democracy that permits "an assault on democratic freedoms … in the name of democracy."[ii] Anything may be permitted in the name of democracy, Derrida worried aloud, from "fascist and Nazi totalitarianisms" to the "demagogy of the leader" to the

neoliberalization or neocolonization of governments.[iii] Still, if the word "democracy" is undecided and subject to history, Derrida continued, then:

> [L]et's not stop using a word whose heritage is undeniable even if its meaning is still obscured, obfuscated, reserved. … We do not yet know what we have inherited; we are the legatees of this Greek word and of what it assigns to us, enjoins us, bequeaths or leaves us, indeed delegates or leaves over to us. We are undeniably the heirs or legatees, the delegates, of this word, and we are saying 'we' here as the very legatees or delegates of this word.[iv]

Recalling Hannah Arendt, who once wrote that every political framework depends on what each new generation does with it, Derrida encouraged the next generation of philosophers to become "heirs," "legetees," or "delegates" of this shifting signifier.[v] What has taken place in Continental philosophy over the past decade is precisely this: A new generation of philosophers has undertaken a shared or collective project to reflect on the term "democracy." The chief aim of this essay is to summarize this recent work.

In 2007, for example, Marc Crépon, the new director of the Philosophy Department at the *École normale supérieure*, and Bernard Stiegler, a prolific philosopher and one of the more creative interpreters of Heidegger and Derrida in Continental thought, wrote the still-untranslated *De la démocratie participative* collaboratively.[vi] The book, which presented itself as a continuation of Derrida's "last texts" on democracy, predicted a coming era of "protests" and "demonstrations" due to a "crisis of political representation" that had reached a tipping point.[vii] Crépon and Steigler described the technocratic state as undemocratic and discussed how technology or social media would aid new experiments in political participation.

The contemporary project of rethinking democracy in France goes well beyond the scope of the late work of Derrida, however. In 2006, for example, Pierre Rosanvallon, the relatively new chair of political philosophy at the Collège de France, used a chair once held by Michel Foucault to publish *La contre-démocratie. La politique à l'âge de la defiance*. Rosanvallon's text

examined the rates of distrust for governments around the world and citizens' attempts to "counter" these representative systems through alternative forms of democratic participation. He followed up on this work with lecture courses on democracy at the Collège and two further books on the subject.

In fact, many Continental philosophers have written monographs on democracy in recent years, including Jacques Rancière (*Hatred of Democracy* [2005]), Jean-Luc Nancy (*The Truth of Democracy* [2008]), and Étienne Balibar (*Equaliberty* [2010]; *Citizenship* [2012]). Two collected volumes on democracy were organized by La Fabrique in Paris in 2008 and 2013 and were translated into multiple languages immediately. The resulting books—*Democracy in What State?* [2008] and *What is a People?* [2013]—included essays by Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, Judith Butler, Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Rancière, and others. Collaborative, anonymous books like *The Coming Insurrection* [2007], *To Our Friends* [2014], and *Maintenant* [2017] have appeared in lock step with the pace of democratic movements. Earlier important works on democracy, such as Miguel Abensour's *Democracy Against the State* [2001], have been translated. And titles like Boaventura de Sousa Santos's edited volume *Democratizing Democracy* (2007), Marc Crépon's *Elections* [2012], Judith Butler's *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015), and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Assembly* (2017) have become routine and widely read.

Despite the supposed omnipresence of "democracy" today, these philosophers have expressed concerns about a growing distance between representative governments and actual democracy.[viii] For Marc Crépon and Bernard Stiegler, we are well into a worldwide "crisis of political representation" and a potentially dangerous political era of anything but.[ix] Yet instead of listening to constituents and adopting reforms, representative governments are increasingly

defined by what philosophers like Jacques Rancière have called "postdemocracy," or a politics in which expert representatives no longer feel the need to listen to their constituents in order to govern.[x] Because representative governments are failing to produce what Jean-Luc Nancy has called "the truth of democracy," or because they actually amount to what Jacques Rancière has called a "hatred of democracy," many philosophers are reflecting on democratic assembly itself.[xi] This renewed interest in democratic assembly is sometimes an attempt to interpret the phenomena taking place in public squares in recent years.[xii] In other cases, it is the serious consideration of an alternative to the system of modern representation. Ultimately, it is the critique of daily life under neoliberalism and the consideration of a life worth living, which for these philosophers begins with being seen and counted in public space.[xiii]

The crucial point is this: In accordance with neoliberal theory, the modern state has ceased to be a government of, by, and for the people, and has become a government that is overseen by and exists for the sake of the financial market; the state and its representatives are no longer directly responsible for citizens, but for creating the optimal conditions for global financial markets and encouraging competition in everyday life.[xiv] As Wendy Brown puts it in *Undoing the Demos* (2015), democratic governments have not merely been stymied by advocates of neoliberalism over the last several decades—they have been "hollowed out from within."[xv]

This neoliberal transformation of modern government over the past several decades has produced at least four major political effects worldwide: a crisis of political representation, measured in part by low voter turnout and the lowest government approval ratings in modern history; high rates of protests and demonstrations; the rise of identitarian groups or political parties that support or gaslight nationalism, xenophobia, and violence against minorities; and even new, democratic alternatives.[xvi] Meanwhile, recent scholarship on democracy among

Continental philosophers can be summarized around four corresponding foci: the loss of support for political representatives worldwide; a profound concern about distant or technocratic neoliberal government and a renewed interest in the practice of democratic assembly; criticism of emerging nationalist parties and candidates; and an emerging debate concerning the future of democracy.

As we consider these topics alongside recent works on democracy, we will examine the following three questions: How did we get here? What is a political life today? What is the future of democracy?

II. How Did We Get Here? The Neoliberal Transformation of Modern Government

> Future historians may well look upon the years 1978-80 as a revolutionary turning-point in the world's social and economic history.
>
> –David Harvey[xvii]

> My dream is a hemispheric common market with open trade and open borders.
>
> –Hillary Clinton (2013 Speech to a Brazilian Bank)[xviii]

As France's political chair at the Collège de France, Pierre Rosanvallon, has argued, representative governments around the world have witnessed the statistical "erosion of citizens' confidence in political leaders and institutions" over the past twenty-five years.[xix] Today we are confronted with a rising rate of voting abstentions in elections around the world and the lowest government approval ratings in modern history.[xx] The mistake of political philosophers, writes Rosanvallon, has been to assume that this disinterest in voting has been the result of a passive, apathetic citizenry. To the contrary, there has been an increase in political participation by other means, including high rates of participation in demonstrations and strikes globally, increased

support for identitarian nationalist movements, and even the election of "outsider," "self-entrepreneur" candidates in places like the United States or India. How did we get here?

In her 2015 book, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, Wendy Brown argues that neoliberalism has quietly and effectively eroded the basic elements of democratic government over the past three decades.[xxi] Judith Butler and Étienne Balibar begin their most recent works with a similar observation.[xxii] This observation is not new. Continental philosophers have long warned specifically that neoliberalism—a name for a distinct, historical mutation of capitalism in the 1970s and 1980s in which the state actively supports the free market—would undermine representative government and the public's trust in it.[xxiii] Their term for this political and economic revolution, neoliberalism, is itself an attempt to name and date an ensemble of social and economic policies that emerged in the 1970s. Following Foucault, who developed the term in his 1979 lecture course in an attempt to periodize what he saw as a startling economic transition in the late 1970s, Continental philosophers have invoked the word to refer to a way of thinking that considers the primary concern of the state to be aiding the financial market, and the primary concern of the human being to be self-entrepreneurship.[xxiv]

Neoliberal policies primarily support the privatization of public goods, the deregulation of markets, free and global trade, and a society of self-entrepreneurship and competition. But unlike *laissez-faire* or liberal government—a "leave us alone" policy in which the state does not interfere with private, financial markets—neoliberalism is a "positive liberalism" or "intervening liberalism," as Foucault puts it in his lecture course on the topic. In other words, rather than leaving private enterprises alone and letting financial losses be losses, as was generally the case in *laissez-faire* or liberal government, neoliberal government uses the resources of the state to assist, closely monitor, and intervene in the financial market *for the market's sake*.[xxv] In the end,

Foucault concludes, the reversal of neoliberalism implies that "it is the market that supervises the state and not the other way around."[xxvi] Here's Foucault describing this historical transition from liberalism to neoliberalism succinctly in his lecture course:

> [I]nstead of accepting a free market defined by the state and kept as it were under state supervision—which was, in a way, the initial formula of liberalism …—the ordoliberals say we should completely turn the formula around and adopt the free market as organizing and regulating principle of the state .... In other words: a state under the supervision of the market rather than a market supervised by the state. … This, I think was the reversal they carried out. And what is important and decisive in current neo-liberalism can, I think, be situated here.[xxvii]

In the midst of Foucault's lecture course, roughly from the years of 1978 to 1980, the governments of the United States, Great Britain, and China began to be reformed: entire sectors of the economy were deregulated, from telecommunications to the environment to the financial market itself; monopolies were no longer of any direct concern and grew exponentially and globally; corporate taxes were reduced dramatically, if not effectively eliminated; and tax rates on wealthy individuals plummeted—in the US, for instance, tax rates on wealthy individuals were reduced from 70 to 28 percent after President Reagan took office.[xxviii] As government budgets became insolvent because of the loss of revenue, austerity measures and debt "restructuring" programs were introduced in an easily predictable, but rarely explained, cycle. Simply put, there was no longer enough money for basic government services; there was always a need for further austerity, or a rise in the cost of programs like higher education or public housing. As a result, public entities like education, social security, healthcare, government oversight agencies, and even parts of the military were subject to severe budget cuts or privatized. Still, for neoliberals, this privatization was already the calculated *telos* of the initial tax cuts, and new taxes were presented as harmful to the economy.

The function of a neoliberal state is no longer to control unemployment or provide basic services like public education or health care, for example, because this type of intervention

interferes with the framework of a truly competitive (and thus free and fair) market. Instead, the role of the state is simply to create the optimal conditions for financial markets, to assist these markets, and to expand free markets wherever possible.[xxix] Thus, in addition to domestic markets, neoliberals began to seek higher returns on investments abroad by offering loans to foreign governments in places like Mexico in the early 1980s—a strategy that continues today in places like Greece or Puerto Rico. If the loans cannot be repaid by the borrowing countries, debt "restructuring" schemes privatize foreign governments and effectively repossess their national energy programs, for example, or state-owned shipping ports that might otherwise pay for public pensions. As David Harvey writes, "if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture ... (particularly in democracies)."[xxx]

Still, what is ultimately at stake in the neoliberal transformation of government is not primarily government itself. It is a profound transformation of the human subject. Similar to Plato, who argued in Book VIII of the *Republic* that government was the result of a specific form of the self or soul, Foucault shows that neoliberal government can only function through neoliberal subjects, or a neoliberal form of life or subjectivity. This subjectivity does for neoliberals what government cannot and should not do: It instructs and manages the state's population. More specifically, neoliberal social policy attempts to change the definition of the human being from *homo politicus*, or a political human being who finds its ultimate meaning as a political being, to *homo oeconomicus*, or a human being who finds its ultimate meaning as an "entrepreneur of himself" in a free and incessant marketplace.[xxxi] Instead of being "by nature a political animal," to quote Aristotle, a neoliberal human being is, eidetically, a self-entrepreneur

who builds its own "human capital" by garnering likes on social media, for instance, or amassing a substantial following on Twitter, or competing on a reality TV show that reconstructs a life in which one's friends are, in fact, competitors.[xxxii] In the coming era of neoliberalism, Foucault writes, "the individual's life itself … must make him into a sort of permanent and multiple enterprise."[xxxiii]

Although philosophers from Aristotle to Arendt hold to the contrary that to be deprived of a meaningful political community is to be "deprived of things essential to a truly human life,"[xxxiv] early neoliberal texts prescribe a social policy of individualization and competition that opposes all forms of collectivization or socialization.[xxxv] As Margaret Thatcher put it in a newspaper interview: "What's irritated me about the whole direction of politics in the last 30 years is that it's always been towards the collectivist society. People have forgotten about the personal society." She continues, "Economics are the method; the object is to change the heart and soul.""[xxxvi] This new "soul" of neoliberalism is not merely the liberal subject—a nineteenth-century factory or firm worker whose product was external, independent, and ultimately estranged from itself by the firms' owners or capitalists; it is a subject whose product lies within and defines its very soul. The neoliberal subject is a subject of self-capital, "human capital," self-entrepreneurship, or even various, self-enterprising persona. Foucault describes this neoliberal "self" or "soul" in the final two lectures of his course, saying:

> The stake in all neoliberal analysis is...a homo oeconomicus as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of his earnings....What does he produce? Well, quite simply, he produces his own satisfaction.[xxxvii]

In sum, the basic incompatibility of neoliberalism and democracy is not only that neoliberalism is a state of and for the market rather than the *demos*. It is that, under neoliberalism, the human desire for participation in a political community is transformed into a

desire to amass one's own "human capital" in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Under neoliberalism, the human being has no *polis* to enter—only a "space of economic freedom."[xxxviii] Wendy Brown helps us to understand this point further, writing, "[N]eoliberalism transmogrifies every human domain and endeavor, along with humans themselves, according to a specific image of the economic. All conduct is economic conduct; all spheres of existence are framed and measured by economic terms and metrics, even when those spheres are not directly monetized."[xxxix] Democracy cannot exist because the political sphere itself does not properly exist. Even appearing in public space with others can be seen as an assault on neoliberalism, adds Judith Butler.[xl] The private sphere, once a retreat from the marketplace and self-enterprise, no longer truly exists either. And the degree to which "social" media reifies the norms of neoliberalism is algorithmically exponential.

Still, recent works like Butler's *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* or Étienne Balibar's *Citizenship* are considering what new democratic possibilities might emerge from out of neoliberalism. Balibar poses the following question: "To what extent can we imagine that neoliberalism contains, at least in a negative form, the premises of a *new configuration* of citizenship outside of its traditional institutions (namely, *representative democracy* …)?"[xli] If the State under neoliberalism, Balibar writes, exists solely for the sake of the free market rather than being an institution of and for the *demos*, then perhaps we must look for a kind of citizenship "beyond the state or *in the absence* of the state's political monopoly, rather than as its foundation."[xlii] And if the system of representation under neoliberalism, he adds, is indebted to private financial interests more than ever, then perhaps this implies *not only* the "devalorization of some *specific* form of representation, but the disqualification of *the very principle of representation itself*."[xliii]

III. The Failure of Representation: "Another World is Possible"

> … the instant the People is legitimately assembled as a Sovereign body, all jurisdiction of the Government ceases, the executive power is suspended, and the person of the humblest Citizen is as sacred and inviolable as that of the first Magistrate; because where the Represented person is, there is no longer any Representative.
>
> –Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract*[xliv]

Several recent works on democracy in Continental philosophy begin by observing a similar phenomenon: The system of modern, political representation is in free fall. Citizens' trust in political representatives and government institutions has eroded, and there has been a failure on the part of government officials to listen and adopt meaningful reforms. Meanwhile, as Balibar suggests above, modern political movements like M15, Occupy, or Nuit debout are no longer issuing demands to their representatives; they are attempting to experience or explore a different form of politics entirely. As Dario Azzellini and Marina Sitrin have written, we not only hear a similar refrain from Moscow to Madrid today—"You can't represent us!"—we are also witnessing an attempt to reinvent democracy.[xlv]

New works by Marc Crépon, Étienne Balibar, Jacques Rancière, Jean-Luc Nancy, Pierre Rosanvallon, Judith Butler, The Invisible Committee, and others begin by exploring a "crisis of political representation," or, as Foucault might put it: "a state which, because of its defects, is mistrusted by everyone on both the right and the left."[xlvi] The most immediate concern among these philosophers is what Pierre Rosanvallon has called an "age of distrust" in which citizens have lost faith in political representatives and institutions. But for philosophers like Jacques Rancière, this distrust in representative systems is a direct result of neoliberal government. As Rancière writes:

> [W]e can specify the rules that lay down the minimal conditions under which a representative system can be declared democratic.… [W]hat we call democracy is a statist and government functioning that is exactly the contrary: eternally elected members …; representatives of the people that largely come from one administrative school; ministers or their collaborators who are also given posts in public or semipublic companies; fraudulent financing of parties through public works contracts; businesspeople who invest colossal sums in trying to win electoral mandates; owners of private media empires that use their public functions to monopolize the empire of the public media. In a word: the monopolizing of *la chose publique* by a solid alliance of State oligarchy and economic oligarchy.[xlvii]

In an attempt to circumvent a representative system that citizens on both the left and the right increasingly distrust, at least two very different critiques of representation are emerging.

In the first case, a more democratic alternative to neoliberal government has been pursued by citizens and philosophers alike in recent years. In Spain, protestors chant, "¡Democracia Real YA!," "Real Democracy Now!" In Greece, they adopt the Zapatista's slogan, "Ya basta!," "Enough is enough!" And in the United States of America, they exclaim, "This is what democracy looks like!" With slogans like these, it is important to recognize that many of today's social and political movements are no longer issuing demands *to* their political representatives; nightly assemblies with rotating facilitators are a sustained inquiry into another form of politics altogether.[xlviii] They are first and foremost a desire to *experience* political life in public space.

Over the past decade, new works on democracy by Continental philosophers have devoted themselves to exploring this renewed interest in democratic assembly. Judith Butler's most recent book, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, begins with this observation, writing: "Since the emergence of mass numbers of people in Tahrir Square in the winter months of 2010, scholars and activists have taken a renewed interest in the form and effect of public assemblies."[xlix] Other works like Étienne Balibar's *Citizenship* [2012] propose that the contemporary "struggle for democracy" ought to begin with an "experience of democratic citizenship."[l] For Balibar, democracy must begin with the "internal ability of the

militants involved … to offer a prefiguration of an egalitarian community that is deliberative, decisive, and action-taking."[li] Balibar's claim that democracy must first involve an experience of the kind of political life one seeks rather than voting or communicating demands coincides with recent movements like the Indignados, Occupy, or Nuit debout.

Balibar's *Citizen* and Judith Butler's *Notes Toward a Performative Assembly* echo Jean-Luc Nancy's 2007 *The Truth of Democracy*, in which Nancy meditates on democracy and public assembly. Nancy begins by recalling his experience of the student assemblies during the events of May '68 in France. For Jean-Luc Nancy, these assemblies introduced a kind of "irruption or disruption" in representative politics; they did not introduce a "new figure, agency, or authority," but "a true possibility of being *all together, all and each one among all*."[lii] Nancy recalls his experience of public assembly in '68 in order to encourage new assemblies today. Similar to Balibar and Butler, Nancy concludes: "[We] must allow [democracy] to be put into practice and secure multiple places for it," and know that politics can "never assure it."[liii]

Another work that was published in 2007, Marc Crépon and Bernard Stiegler's *De la démocratie participative*, likewise attempted "to reinstate participation at the core of a new political project" by considering new modes of political participation.[liv] For Crépon and Stiegler, this begins with a critique of the modern system of representation and its quintessential technological medium, the television, which brought with it a kind of political disconnection (*déliaison*): the absence of real debate, the censuring of free speech, the repetition of talking points, an inattention to protests, prepared questions, filters, and representatives that repeat what they hear on… television.[lv] With the technology of the internet, they write, it is as though political representation no longer makes sense in our time.[lvi] Unlike the spectator of representative democracy or the television, today's internet-user is capable of participating and

intervening immediately through shared, open forums. The anonymous philosophical collective *The Invisible Committee* reiterates this point in *To Our Friends* [2014]: "Traditional power was representative," they write. "[T]echnologically … all this is obsolete. In today's world … [it is] completely outmoded."[lvii]

Steigler and Crépon explore whether the internet "opens the possibility for…a reconstitution of the participatory condition, without which there is no democracy."[lviii] It is *not* that the internet is a cure or salvation from our dire politics—far from it, says Stiegler—but that new technological means have the potential to reconfigure the modes of discussion and open new, less biased, and largely uncensored political forums.[lix] Despite these democratic possibilities for the internet, others have considered how today's social media and search engine algorithms largely follow the prescription of neoliberalism and amplify a society of competition, human capital, and self-entrepreneurship. As Barbara Cassin writes in *Google Me: One-Click Democracy* [2007], what matters in most social media is the "'I' who 'posts' … for the benefit of a privacy that redefines the borders of the public."[lx] For this reason, Cassin's book sought to disassociate the term "democracy" with Silicon Valley in particular.[lxi] And yet, for Stiegler, unlike the spectator of both representative democracy and the television, the internet-user is at least *capable* of participating in a shared, open forum—a forum that might resemble the mode of discussions in the ancient Greek *polis* more than the liberal and representative theories of representative republics that surfaced in the modern era.[lxii]

These attempts to distinguish democracy from modern, political representation are not new, of course. Plato and Aristotle once labeled an elected government of the "few" an aristocracy or an oligarchy, and distinguished it from a government of the "many" or a democracy. Enlightenment thinkers from Rousseau to Madison likewise distinguished between

democracy and aristocratic representatives or "magistrates" in works like the *Social Contract* or *The Federalist Papers*. For this reason, philosophers like Miguel Abenseur or Pierre Rosanvallon often begin their contemporary reflections by returning to Modern or Enlightenment thought from Machiavelli to Marx.[lxiii] For others, such as Giorgio Agamben or Jacques Rancière, this work often begins with a rethinking of politics in fifth and fourth century Athens.[lxiv] Agamben, for instance, tries to locate the birth of a distinct type of sovereignty in the political philosophy of Aristotle.[lxv] And although Rancière echoes Kropotkin, he frequently cites the example of fifth century Athens.[lxvi] Miguel Abenseur, on the other hand, bases his claims on Marx,[lxvii] while Alain Badiou has invoked Lenin's "vision of the problem of democracy" in order to consider a "'democracy' [that] designates something other than the State" and parliamentary representatives.[lxviii]

What *is* new, however, is the degree to which these critiques of representation and the state are widely shared views today. The degree to which the general public has been aware of neoliberalism increased dramatically in the wake of the worldwide recession of 2008. After the global financial recession of 2007 and 2008, citizens around the world watched as the first action of their governments was to bail out or "shore up" the very financial institutions that committed fraud against them. Mainstream political scientists now tell us definitively that modern, representative government amounts to a global political and economic plutocracy.[lxix] It is not simply the conditions surrounding how representatives are financed and elected that have caused deep concern. It is that government is increasingly unresponsive to citizens and run by private corporations—from schools to prisons to militaries to cabinet secretaries.[lxx] Meanwhile, voters themselves increasingly no longer believe in the system enough to vote.

As Jacques Rancière, Pierre Rosanvallon, Miguel Abensour, and others have argued, one of the underlying issues of voter distrust is that today's representatives base their legitimacy on a kind of *expertise* or "technical know-how" instead of on the general will.[lxxi] As a result, a dissatisfied public finds itself not listened to or even disdained for their ignorance on "complicated" matters like heath care or college education.[lxxii] Wendy Brown, Étienne Balibar, and Jacques Rancière have suggested elsewhere that the public views their government as serving the interests of a corporate or wealthy elite. For this reason, philosophers like Brown and Rancière have encouraged governments to "specify the rules that lay down the minimal conditions under which a representative system can be declared democratic" so that we might determine democratic—not *oligarchic*—electoral procedures.[lxxiii] Étienne Balibar, meanwhile, has proposed "active citizenship" in order to "counter the anti-democratic effects … of expertise and representation."[lxxiv]

In addition to these democratic alternatives to neoliberal government, however, a very different critique of government has gained strength in this neoliberal era. Identitarian candidates like Donald Trump or Marine Le Pen run "outside of" or "against" a failed system of representation. This is not limited to recent elections in the United States and France, of course, but includes, for example, the Swiss People's Party, the Austrian Freedom Party, the Swedish Democrats, the Danish People's Party, Matteo Salvini's Northern League, and Geert Wilders's Party for Freedom.[lxxv] As Jacques Rancière writes in a recent essay, these new, emerging populisms are characterized by "a style of speaking that addresses itself directly to the people," "the assertion that governments and ruling elites are more concerned with their own interests than the state," and "an identitary rhetoric that expresses fear and rejection of foreigners."[lxxvi]

There are, nevertheless, at least three ways in which these movements appropriate or wield antineoliberal sentiments. The first is a protectionist rhetoric that critiques globalization and free trade: Jobs will be brought back, trade policies will be renegotiated, international central banks will be traded out for national ones, etc. The second is their claim that political institutions are actually working against them with their tax money. The third is their use of democratic rhetoric in this context, as most of them include words like "people" or "freedom" in their names.

Of course, this protectionism does not, in the end, create an economic "wall" around the country, but a social one that somehow returns the country to a skewed national identity. Popular anger at political representatives or banks is skillfully redirected towards foreigners or minorities. More devout leaders and followers openly claim that these minorities have contaminated or polluted a fraternal "people." This closed, original, "fraternal" notion of a "people" is the main focus of a work by Jacques Rancière, Sadri Khiari, Bruno Bosteels, and others called *What is a People?* [2013].

Balibar, who has written extensively on the topic of borders and walls, has considered new threats for immigrants without papers in this climate, while Khiari and Santos depict the neocolonization of neoliberalism in the so-called "third world." Wendy Brown and Johanna Oksala have focused their attention on neoliberalism's effects on women in particular, while Butler has focused her attention on gender, sexual, and racial minorities "right to appear." In such a climate, Butler writes, "every member of the population [is] potentially or actually precarious."[lxxvii]

In summary, several emerging movements, on both the right and the left, seek a "democracy" that is wholly different from or outside of the current system of political

representation. While these two political trajectories are very different from one another, both are rooted in the widespread distrust of representative government over the past several decades. In a future essay, I would like to further discuss the politics of exception or exclusion that eclipses identitarian movements' critiques of free trade and globalization. I would like to reflect on these movements' appropriation of democratic rhetoric in particular. I would then like to make sense of a seemingly contradictory interest in "self-entrepreneur" candidates with "economic genius." And, finally, I would like to consider seriously the appeal for members to participate in large, stadium-like assemblies with fervent, nationalist speakers at a time when contemporary life is largely competitive and individualistic. What follows in this essay, however, is the discussion of a more democratic alternative to neoliberal government.

IV. The Future of Democracy: Constituent or Destituent Power

> To speak of constituent power is to speak of democracy.
>
> –Antonio Negri, *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State*[lxxviii]

> Starting with French revolution, the political tradition of modernity has conceived of radical changes in the form of a revolutionary process that acts as the *pouvoir constituant*, the "constituent power" of a new institutional order. I think that we have to abandon this paradigm and try to think something as a *puissance destituante*, a "purely destituent power," that cannot be captured in the spiral of security.
>
> –Giorgio Agamben, "For a Theory of Destituent Power"[lxxix]

> We did not come together today to change the world. We are here today with the most modest of purposes: to make a new world.
>
> –Subcomandante Marcos, *Our Word is Our Weapon*[lxxx]

Since at least 2013, a debate has been underway in Continental philosophy between two different types of democratic activity. The first kind of democratic activity involves what has traditionally been called *constituent* power, or power that places demands upon the state and

seeks a change in the policies of the government at hand through demonstrations in public space. This might include, for example, protests about raising the minimum age of retirement in European countries, attempts to rehabilitate or reform center-left or workers' parties in the UK, the US, or France, or the formation of alternative political parties like Syriza in Greece or Podemos in Spain. A *second* form of democratic activity, however, fears that such efforts to rehabilitate or reform the current system will only end up strengthening its institutions by creating a lasting façade that they are representative of actual workers, deteriorating ecosystems, and so on. As an alternative, a form of democratic activity has emerged that has been described *not* as democracy *in opposition to* a state in need of reform, but as democracy *outside* of, *detached* from, or *withdrawn* from the state. This second democratic approach, labeled *destituent* power, was put forward in a public lecture by Giorgio Agamben in 2013 in the wake of protests in Europe, and by the Invisible Committee in their most recent work *To Our Friends* [2014]. It also marks a serious turn in Agamben's philosophical work.

The first kind of democratic activity, *constituent power*, operates most often through political demonstration against or in opposition to the state. In other words, for someone like Rancière, democracy is a kind of "political demonstration" (manifestation) that "makes visible that which had no reason to be seen"; for Butler, it involves "the right to appear."[lxxxi] The crucial point, however, as Balibar says in his recent work on democracy, is that constituent demonstrations or insurrections always take place within a dialectic—"the dialectic of 'constituent power' and 'constituted power,' of insurrection and reconstitution."[lxxxii] The task of this constituent power is to "openly confront the lack of democracy in existing institutions and transform them," and the "active citizen is the agent of this transformation."[lxxxiii] Thus, for philosophers like Rancière or Rosanvallon, the goal of protests is to "counteract" or "[challenge]

government's claims"; they are "contestations," writes Butler; they introduce what Rosanvallon calls "counter-democracy" in order to counter the representative system at hand in the hopes of reforming it.[lxxxiv]

From Hannah Arendt to Antonio Negri, Continental philosophers have developed various theories of constituent movements or revolutions that depend on "the uprising of the people for freedom," a "multitude, appearing … in broad daylight."[lxxxv] "To speak of constituent power," wrote Antonio Negri in his monumental 1992 book, "is to speak of democracy."[lxxxvi] However, the role of *destituent* power, as Agamben has recently defined it, is not to challenge and reconstitute power but to *destitute* it by withdrawing from it; it is simultaneously an effort to create a space, much like Occupy or M15 or Nuit debout did, for exploring another form of politics entirely.

In a public lecture to youth in Athens in 2013, Agamben addresses the concern that it is increasingly difficult and ineffective to criticize governments through public assembly and peaceful protest. Part of the problem, as we have seen, is that representatives adhere to the advice of market "experts" and no longer feel the need to listen to their constituents directly. Agamben's concern goes further than this, however. He remarks in his lecture that we are no longer living in a functioning, democratic society, but a "police state" in which the "police officer … acts so as to speak as a sovereign."[lxxxvii] The primary agent in between taxpayers and their representatives—the police—prohibits peaceful demonstrations and assemblies, denies protest permits or reroutes them, utilizes military grade equipment, commits acts of violence against demonstrators, protects fraudulent banks and repossesses homes on their behalf, and surveils citizens. The role of this modern "police," as Rancière suggests, is ultimately to hide dissent

from Istanbul to Ferguson, Missouri—to insist, as he puts it: "Move along! There's nothing to see here!"[lxxxviii]

Agamben concludes his 2013 remarks in Athens with what he says is "perhaps the most urgent political problem" of "strategy." This concerns a departure from the notion of democracy as constituent power and the consideration of a different strategy: the withdrawal or absence of the *demos*, or *ademy*. As Giorgio Agamben outlines in his public lecture:

> Starting with French revolution, the political tradition of modernity has conceived of radical changes in the form of a revolutionary process that acts as the *pouvoir constituant*, the "constituent power" of a new institutional order. I think that we have to abandon this paradigm and try to think something as a *puissance destituante*, a "purely destituent power," that cannot be captured in the spiral of security.[lxxxix]

This very concept of destituent power immediately appears in a 2014 work by the anonymous, collective group The Invisible Committee, which is known for their 2007 work *The Coming Insurrection*. In the 2014 work *To Our Friends*, the committee reverses its earlier position on constituent power, writing: "There's no such thing as a democratic insurrection."[xc] "Misdirections of this kind encourage us to reconceive the idea of revolution as *pure destitution* instead," which means "leaving the paradigm of government" behind.[xci]

To put this idea more simply, as one person recently did at the 2017 G7 meeting in Italy, "We think the only solution is not to expect any more from these governments."[xcii] If "revolutions and insurrections correspond to constituent power," explains Agamben, then "[a] power that was only just overthrown … will rise again in another form, in the incessant, inevitable dialectic between constituent power and constituted power."[xciii] In destituent power, by contrast, constituted power "becomes undone, is rendered inoperative, liberated and suspended from its 'economy.'"[xciv] What is needed for this, according to Agamben, is the absence or withdrawal of a *demos* because it "allows us to depose the fiction of a people that it pretends to

represent."[xcv] This sort of destitution could be thought of as a "coming politics," writes Agamben, echoing Derrida's democracy *à venir* or Nancy's *survenir*.[xcvi]

What is most important about destituent power for Agamben and the Invisible Committee is that, unlike constituent power, it permits the embodied, philosophical exploration of alternative forms of life with others. As such, it allows one to abandon neoliberal life for a moment and consider a different form of life. "What is at stake [in destitution] is living itself," writes Agamben; it "coincides completely and constitutively with … *living a life*."[xcvii] If life under neoliberalism entails "the obligation to maximize one's one market value as the ultimate aim in life," writes Butler, then these new public assemblies explore a life worth living.[xcviii]

Instead of focusing on *changing* the world, as Marx prescribed in the *Theses on Feuerbach*, destituent power creates a new world with others—even a world that might only last a short while. Agamben's example for this is the model of the feast or holiday (*la festa*), "which, on the model of the Hebrew Shabbat, has been conceived essentially as a temporary suspension of productive activity, of melacha."[xcix] The Invisible Committee elaborates upon this idea further by suggesting that recent political movements ought to be interpreted precisely in this way—as not primarily attempting to reform their current governments through constituent power, but as freely exploring another form of life with others. They write:

> The true content of Occupy Wall Street was not the demand … for better wages, decent housing, or a more generous social security, but *disgust with the life we're forced to live*. Disgust with a life in which we're all *alone*, alone facing the necessity for each one to make a living, house oneself, feed oneself, realize one's potential, and attend to one's health, *by oneself*. … The life in common that was attempted in Zuccotti Park, in tents, in the cold, in the rain, surrounded by police in the dreariest of Manhattan's squares was definitely not a full rollout of the *vita nova*—it was just the point where the sadness of metropolitan existence began to be flagrant. At last it was possible to grasp our shared condition *together*, our equal reduction to the status of entrepreneurs of the self.[c]

Earlier considerations of destituent power can be found in 1980 in the late, two chapters on the state in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, in Deleuze's unpublished 1979-

1980 lecture course on the state, and in debates on alternative political communities throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, such as Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Inoperative Community* [1986].[ci] One might add to this list Clastres's *Society Against the State* [1974], Spivak's *In Other Worlds* (1987), or Derrida's *Specters of Marx* [1993] and *Politics of Friendship* [1994] as works that explore destituent power, or texts like Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Possibility of a World* [2013] or *What's These Worlds Coming To?* [2011] that consider the creation or "struction" of alternative political communities. In his most recent text, *En quel temps vivons-nous?* [2017], Rancière mentions Paolo Virno's political theory of "exodus" as a way of thinking about destituent power.[cii]

In addition to these philosophical works, one of the earliest examples of this kind of withdrawal, as a response to neoliberal government in particular, can be found in the mostly rural, agrarian, indigenous and non-indigenous community in Chiapas, Mexico, which withdrew from Mexico, organized itself horizontally, and held the "First International *Encuentro* for Humanity and against Neoliberalism." After Paul Volcker's neoliberal strategy or the "Volcker Shock" drove Mexico into default from 1982 to 1984, it could no longer pay back its debt due to the forced rise in interest rates on Wall Street-backed loans to the Mexican government. As a result, the Mexican government was forced to implement austerity and privatization programs or "debt restructuring" schemes that transformed it into a neoliberal state.[ciii] What made matters especially difficult in the 1980s for Mexican workers and farmers was compounded by the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement, when crops like corn, for instance, were no longer worth much in Mexico. The Zapatistas were formed in the midst of the Mexican debt crisis in 1983, went public on the same day as the passage of NAFTA in 1994, and held the "First International *Encuentro* for Humanity and against Neoliberalism" in 1996. Their deliberate

strategy of withdrawal from the neoliberal Mexican government and the formation of an alternative, democratic community is suggestive of a kind of destituent power in the wake of neoliberal government. However, recent movements in public squares or even destituent approaches to money and finance show us that the Zapatista community is far from being the only model of destituent power.

V. Conclusion

In summary, whereas liberals attempted to keep the state from interfering in private enterprise ("leave us alone"), neoliberals want to *replace* government services with private enterprise, actively use the resources of the state to support "the market," and expand such markets worldwide, including by force, if necessary. This neoliberal "reversal" is complete when the primary role of government representatives and institutions is no longer to leave financial markets alone, but to allow the state to be directed by them; any relationship between representatives and their constituents is secondary or even superfluous. Alongside neoliberal government, and in its wake, is a society in which the guiding axioms for human beings are self-entrepreneurship and competition. According to neoliberal theory, this culture of the self, *homo oeconomicus*, is the warp and woof that weaves neoliberal society.

The neoliberal transformation of modern government over the last forty years has meant the transition away from democratic representation, or a government that acts directly *for* its people, and the loss of *homo politicus* as a lived condition. Philosophers today ask how a meaningful, political life is possible when the act of voting takes place in an election that is financed and run by private, multinational corporations, when representatives are replaced by tacticians of an abstract market system, and when daily life becomes the private enterprise of

oneself in an endless economic sphere. If, after Derrida, we choose to name this political life "democracy," then how should this term be inherited today? We recall from Derrida that the signifier "democracy" is especially indeterminate and open to alteration through speech acts—"*This* is what democracy looks like." Yet should democratic activity today seek to *reform* government through *constituent* demonstrations or explore *destituent* alternatives in new spaces where political life is possible? Should disaffected citizens organize around popular protests and elections, or should they withdraw and dissolve the state's legitimacy through lack—namely, the lack of a people that are said to constitute and legitimize it?

It is possible to do both at once, of course. As Rancière put it recently, voting to avoid the worst "is the kind of dilemma you can deal with in five minutes."[civ] Still, recent philosophical reflections on democracy, and new interest in destitution power, also have to do with something more: The era of *homo oeconomicus*.

As we saw, neoliberalism functions through a way of life whose daily habits are self-entrepreneurship and competition, and the population of the state is managed by this way of life. The renewed philosophical interest in destituent power, however, attempts to take this neoliberal notion as its point of departure and take flight from this way of life. It asks: Is there a "we" for whom a life of self-entrepreneurship and competition could be replaced with a culture of sharing and taking part? It asks, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari: Would it be possible to flee this "chess game of the State" with "an anonymous, collective, or third-person function?"[cv]

The work of the Invisible Committee is especially interesting in this regard. In a neoliberal culture of self-entrepreneurship, they write anonymous, collective, and third-person texts. Their latest attempt to *withdraw* and write *to our friends* is an invitation to live differently with others. Despite once having once called for protests against the state in an attempt to reform

it, their text, *To Our Friends*, signals a new plan entirely. It refuses to govern a failed system and calls for a destituent politics of friendship. The book begins, tellingly, with the following epigraph: "There is no other world. There's just another way to live."[cvi]

This sort of destituent power, which involves the exploration of a life outside of the neoliberal state and *homo oeconomicus*, is distinct from Romantic *solitude* and the civil *disobedience* of libertarians. It is not internal or individualistic, but collective and exposed; it is mostly taking place, at least for the time being, in urban environments; and it is still organized largely by social media. Recent destituent movements have had a profound influence on electoral campaigns and young voters in particular. They have even begun what some have called an era of protest against government. But this was never their intent. Destituent movements are a search for a political future beyond neoliberalism, yes, but one that no longer expects any meaningful change from neoliberal governments. They are about "knowing what a desirable form of life would be," or "constructing what *was missing from their lives before*."[cvii] Because what is needed for contesting neoliberalism and moving beyond it, writes the Invisible Committee, is "*a different idea of life*."[cviii]

So, how might we live otherwise? Is this what "democracy" looks like?

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[i] I would like to thank the students at Vassar College who participated in a Fall 2016 seminar on this topic for a memorable study together. I would also like to thank my former colleagues in the Philosophy Department at Vassar for their constructive and encouraging comments on an earlier version of this paper.

[ii] Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 25, 34. The book brings together two lectures on democracy that were initially presented over the summer of 2002. The title of the work in French, *Voyous*, was both a response to the Iraq War and the campaign of Nicolas Sarkozy for French President in 2002. "Voyous" is the French translation of the English "rogue,"

as in the United States' classification of "rogue states" or states that support or sponsor terrorism. The term was also invoked by Nicolas Sarkozy in a derogatory way to describe the kinds of people living in the *banlieues* or poor suburbs of French cities.

[iii] Ibid., 33-34.

[iv] Ibid., 9.

[v] Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 191. The ambiguity of the term "democracy" is far from a contemporary phenomenon. See, for instance, Bertlinde Laniel, *Le Mot Democracy aux États-Unis de 1780 à 1856* (Saint-Étiennes: Presses Universitaires de Saint-Étiennes, 1995). As Laniel showed, even in a study of the word "democracy" from 1780 to 1856 in the United States, there is no stable meaning that can be attached to the word. See also Nicole Loraux, "As for the Name…It Is Called a Democracy," in *The Invention of Athens*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Zone Books, 2006 [1981]), 219-78.

[vi] Unless otherwise noted, all publication dates that are mentioned in the text are the dates in which that publication appeared in its original language. For publications that appeared in a language other than English, their original publication date has been placed in brackets to distinguish this date from the appearance of its English translation.

[vii] Marc Crépon and Bernard Stiegler, *De la démocratie participative: fondements et limites* (Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2007), 27-28. In another 2007 work entitled *Google Me*, Barbara Cassin sought to disassociate the term "democracy" from Silicon Valley. These works were preceded by Stiegler's 2006 *La télécratie contre la démocratie: Lettre ouverte aux représentants politiques*, which critiqued the failure of political representatives to listen and respond to their constituents.

[viii] On the gap between the name "democracy" and government, see, for instance, Jean-Luc Nancy, "Finite and Infinite Democracy," in *Democracy, In What State?*, trans. William McCuaig (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 58; Miguel Abenseur, *Democracy Against the State*, trans. Max Blechman and Martin Breaugh (Malden, MA: Polity, 2011), xxi; Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Truth of Democracy*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 37-41; Pierre Rosanvallon, *Counter-Democracy: Politics in an Age of Distrust*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1; Jacques Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*, trans. Steve Concoran (London: Verso, 2006), 92; Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005 [2003]), 89-90; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 232; Giorgio Agamben, "For a Theory of Destituent Power" (public lecture organized by the Nicos Poulantzas Institute and SYRIZA Youth, Athens, Greece, November 16, 2013), accessible online at http://www.chronosmag.eu/index.php/g-agamben-for-a-theory-of-destituent-power.html.

[ix] Cf. Crépon and Stiegler, *De la démocratie participative*, 25. My translation.

[x] Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 102-03.

[xi] Jacques Rancière, *En quel temps vivons-nous?* (Paris: La fabrique éditions, 2017), 7; Nancy, *The Truth of Democracy*, 5-6, 32; Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*.

[xii] See, for instance, Jean-Luc Nancy, with Pierre-Philippe Jandin, *Le possibilité d'un monde* (Paris: Les petits Platons, 2013), 63.

[xiii] See, for instance, Crépon and Stiegler, *De la démocratie participative*; Jacques Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*, trans. Steve Concoran (London: Verso, 2006); and Jacques

Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics," in *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steve Concoran (New York: Continuum, 2010), 27-44.

[xiv] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 120-21.

[xv] Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2015), 18.

[xvi] Ibid., 28. Cf. Mattei Dogan, *Political Mistrust and the Discrediting of Politicians* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Jacques Capdevielle, *Démocratie. La panne* (Paris: Broché, 2005); Mark Franklin, *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[xvii] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 1.

[xviii] Speech to a Brazilian bank in 2013, reported by Wikileaks, quoted by Chris Wallace on October 19, 2016 at the Third US Presidential Debate in Las Vegas.

[xix] Pierre Rosanvallon, *La contre-démocratie. La politique à l'âge de la défiance* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006), 1, 9. My translation.

[xx] Ibid., 28. Rosanvallon cites rates of trust and voting abstentions in multiple studies, including: Dogan, *Political Mistrust and the Discrediting of Politicians*; Capdevielle, *Démocratie*; Franklin, *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945*.

[xxi] Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 9, 17.

[xxii] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 11; Étienne Balibar, *Citizenship*, trans. Thomas Scott-Railton (Cambridge: Polity, 2015), 6.

[xxiii] See, for instance, Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 116; Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 46, 87-88; Balibar, *Citizenship*, 6; Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 11-18; The Invisible Committee, *To Our Friends*, trans. Robert Hurley (South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 2015), 27, 190; Dardot and Laval, *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society*; Peters, *Poststructuralism, Marxism, and Neoliberalism*; Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*; West, "Goodbye, American Neoliberalism"; Fraser, "The End of Progressive Neoliberalism"; David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Neoliberalism has become an increasingly accepted name among Continental philosophers and political theorists for an ensemble of economic policies, beginning anywhere from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, which lead to the privatization of public goods, the deregulation of markets, free and global trade, military and free market alliances, and a society of self-entrepreneurship and competition.

[xxiv] Ibid.

[xxv] Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 133.

[xxvi] Ibid., 116.

[xxvii] Ibid., 116-17.

[xxviii] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 26.

[xxix] Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 120-21.

[xxx] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 2.

[xxxi] Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 226.

[xxxii] Arist., *Pol*., 1.2, 3.6; *Eth. Nic*., 1.1-2; Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 219.

[xxxiii] Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 241.

[xxxiv] Arist., *Pol*. 1.2; Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 198-99, 58.

[xxxv] Ibid., 144.

[xxxvi] Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Butt, "Mrs. Thatcher: The First Two Years," Interview, *Sunday Times*, May 3, 1981.

[xxxvii] Ibid.

[xxxviii] Ibid., 116.

[xxxix] Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 10.

[xl] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 16.

[xli] Ibid., 5-6.

[xlii] Balibar, *Citizenship*, 117.

[xliii] Ibid.,118.

[xliv] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract*, in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 4, ed. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly, trans. Judith R. Bush, Roger D. Masters, and Christopher Kelly (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994), 191.

[xlv] Dario Azzellini and Marina Sitrin, *They Can't Represent Us!: Reinventing Democracy from Greece to Occupy* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso Books, 2014).

[xlvi] Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 117.

[xlvii] Rancière, *The Hatred of Democracy*, 72-73.

[xlviii] Cf. Azzellini and Sitrin, *They Can't Represent Us!: Reinventing Democracy from Greece to Occupy*.

[xlix] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 1.

[l] Balibar, *Citizenship*, 129.

[li] Ibid.

[lii] Nancy, *The Truth of Democracy*, 14.

[liii] Ibid., 32.

[liv] Crépon and Stiegler, *De la démocratie participative*, 11.

[lv] Ibid., 49–54.

[lvi] Ibid., 84.

[lvii] The Invisible Committee, *To Our Friends*, trans. Robert Hurley (South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 2015), 83, 58.

[lviii] Crépon and Stiegler, *De la démocratie participative*, 80.

[lix] Ibid., 84.

[lx] Barbara Cassin, "Preface to the English-Language Edition," in *Google Me: One-Click Democracy*, trans. Michael Syrotinski (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), xix.

[lxi] Barbara Cassin, *Google-Moi: La deuxième mission de l'Amérique* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 2007), 144.

[lxii] Crépon and Stiegler, *De la démocratie participative*, 9–17.

[lxiii] See, for instance, Rosanvallon, *La contre-démocratie*, and Abenseur, *Democracy Against the State*.

[lxiv] See, for instance, Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), and Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics."

[lxv] See, for instance, Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

[lxvi] Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics." As Kropotkin put it, "The representative system was organized by the bourgeoisie to ensure their domination, and it will disappear with them. For

the new economic phase that is about to begin we must seek a new form of political organization, based on a principle quite different from that of representation. The logic of events imposes it," in Peter Kropotkin, "Representative Government," *Words of a Rebel*.

[lxvii] Abenseur, *Democracy Against the State*, xxxiii, xl. It is perhaps important to note that Abensour's work follows Pierre Clastres's *Society Against the State* (1973) and Deleuze's 1979-80 lecture course "Appareils d'Etat et Machines de Guerre" (State Apparatuses and War Machines) and his writings on the state in the nomadology discussions of *A Thousand Plateaus*.

[lxviii] Alain Badiou, *Metapolitics* (New York: Verso, 2005), 81.

[lxix] See, for instance, Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens," *Perspectives on Politics*, American Political Science Association 12(3) (September 2014): 564-81; Thomas Picketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2014).

[lxx] Wendy Brown, "We Are All Democrats Now…," in *Democracy, In What State?*, trans. William McCuaig (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 46.

[lxxi] See, for instance, Abensour, *Democracy Against the State*, xxxvi.

[lxxii] Rancière, *The Hatred of Democracy*, 79.

[lxxiii] Ibid., 53, 72-73. Cf. Brown, "We Are All Democrats Now…"

[lxxiv] Balibar, *Citizenship*, 131.

[lxxv] Cf. Pippa Norris. "Authoritarian Populism is Rising Across the West. Here's Why," *The Washington Post*, March 11, 2016.

[lxxvi] Jacques Rancière, "The Populism That Is Not to Be Found," in *What is a People?*, trans. Jody Gladding (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 101.

[lxxvii] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 14.

[lxxviii] Antonio Negri, *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State*, trans. Maurizia Boscagli (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 1.

[lxxix] Agamben, "For a Theory of Destituent Power."

[lxxx] Subcomandante Marcos, *Our Word is Our Weapon*, ed. Juana Ponce de León (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2001), 100.

[lxxxi] Butler, "Gender Politics and the Right to Appear," in *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 24-65; Rancière, *Dissensus*, 38.

[lxxxii] Balibar, *Citizenship*, 117. See also Kropotkin: "Freedom of the press, criticism of the laws, freedom of meeting and association—all were extorted by force, by agitations that threatened to become rebellions. It was by establishing trade unions and practicing strike action despite the edits of Parliament and the hangings of 1813, and by wrecking the factories hardly fifty years ago, that the English workers won the right to associate and to strike" (Peter Kropotkin, from "Representative Government," in *Words of a Rebel*).

[lxxxiii] Balibar, *Citizenship*, 124.

[lxxxiv] Rancière, *The Hatred of Democracy*, 62; Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 9.

[lxxxv] Arendt, *On Revolution*, 38.

[lxxxvi] Antonio Negri, *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State*, trans. Boscagli, 1.

[lxxxvii] Agamben, "For a Theory of Destituent Power."

[lxxxviii] Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics," 37.

[lxxxix] Agamben, "For a Theory of Destituent Power."

[xc] The Invisible Committee, *To Our Friends*, trans. Robert Hurley (South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 2015), 53.

[xci] The Invisible Committee, *To Our Friends*, 74, 79.

[xcii] Marco Rizzo, Interview on *Democracy Now*, April 11, 2017, accessed April 11, 2017, https://www.democracynow.org/2017/4/11/el_sisi_widens_crackdown_on_egyptian.

[xciii] Giorgio Agamben, "What is a Destituent Power?," trans. Stephanie Wakefield, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 32 (2014): 70.

[xciv] Ibid., 69.

[xcv] Ibid., 72.

[xcvi] Ibid. 74.

[xcvii] Ibid., 73, 74.

[xcviii] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 15.

[xcix] Agamben, "What is a destituent power?," 69.

[c] The Invisible Committee, *To Our Friends*, 49.

[ci] See, for example, Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 24: "The nomads invented a war machine in opposition to the State apparatus. History has never comprehended nomadism, the book has never comprehended the outside. … The war machine's relation to an outside is not another 'model'; it is an assemblage that makes thought itself nomadic." Deleuze and Guattari later remark at length on the difference between the State apparatus and the war machine, which is "anonymous, collective, or third person" (ibid., 352).

[cii] Jacques Rancière, *En quel temps vivons-nous?* (Paris: La fabrique éditions, 2017), 23.

[ciii] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 29.

[civ] Jacques Rancière and Éric Aeschimann, "Mais pourquoi se disent-ils tous 'anti-système'? Entretien avec Jacques Rancière," Interview published in *L'Obs*, March 12, 2017.

[cv] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 352. In many ways, *A Thousand Plateaus* is already a destituent response to Foucault's lectures on the state.

[cvi] The Invisible Committee, *To Our Friends*, 9.

[cvii] Ibid., 45, 49.

[cviii] Ibid., 52.